Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

(6)

CONFIDENTIAL

THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE LAO DONG PARTY OF VIET NAM

(April 1956)

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION 1

Comparison with the predecessor Indochinese Communist Party

Power Centers in the Party

III. TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY 3

IV. ORGANIZATION ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL 5

National Party Congress

National Party Conference

Central Committee

Political Bureau (Politburo)

Secretariat

V. DEPARTMENTS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE 10

Comparison with the Communist parties of China and Indonesia

Propaganda and Education Committee

Economic and Financial Committee

"Committee of Party Affairs"

Central Military Committee

Central Control Committee

Other Reported Committees

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

VI. PARTY ORGANIZATION BELOW THE NATIONAL LEVEL 14

Zonal Level

Lower Party Levels

VII. BASIC PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS 17

VIII. OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS 18

"Committees of Cadres"

Autonomous Sections

DIAGRAMS OF THE LAO DONG PARTY OF VIET NAM 20

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE LAO DONG PARTY OF VIET NAM

I. INTRODUCTION

1. There is insufficient reliable information on hand to give a detailed picture of the actual organization of the Lao Dong or Labor Party, the Communist Party of Viet Nam. What is contained herein is primarily the structure of the Party as it is given in the Statutes.

2. The Statutes of the Lao Dong Party, which were framed in 1951 during the anti-French war in Indochina, are not absolutely comprehensive on organizational matters, and were probably so designed intentionally, to permit flexibility and growth of the organization within the Communist framework which places all authority in the Party Center. The differences between the theoretical and actual state of organization of the Party are undoubtedly based upon the several "elastic clauses" of the Statutes, and are also due to the historical developments since the Statutes were written. The actual general outlines and organizational principles of the Lao Dong Party are fairly similar to those of other Communist parties, particularly the Chinese Communist Party. Some portions of the Statutes, notably those concerning the duties of the Central Committee, and the organization of the basic party unit, greatly resemble parts of the constitutions and statutes of other Communist parties, and are couched in typical Communist phrases.

II. PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

3. The Statutes of the Lao Dong Party provide for a pyramidal party structure based on the principle of "democratic centralism." This principle in the Lao Dong Party Statutes -- as in the regulations of other parties -- calls for a highly centralized and authoritarian structure, in which in actuality, the "democratic" aspects inevitably deteriorate to little more than mock congresses and elections.

4. The Lao Dong Party Statutes stipulate that the greatest executive and administrative power at each echelon of party organization, above the party's basic organizational unit, is supposed to be exercised by a representative body composed of representatives elected by the party's

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

next lower echelon. This body in turn theoretically elects a party committee for that particular echelon, to wield the power at that echelon between the regular sessions of the body which elected it. The Statutes also state that all decisions and activities of party authorities at a particular organizational level, with the exception of the highest level, are to be subject to the directives and approval of party authorities at the next higher level. Furthermore, the Lao Dong Party Statutes employ standard Communist terminology to describe organizational components, such as "Central Committee", "Political Bureau," and "basic party unit". The organizational framework described by the party Statutes is clearly modelled after that of other Communist parties and are not based upon indigenous political institutions.

Comparison with the Party's defunct predecessor: The Indochinese Communist Party

5. The organizational structure of the forerunner of the Lao Dong Party, the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) is unknown. Comparison between the two, and the determining of differences if any between the two is impossible. However, French sources report that the framework of the Lao Dong Party differs from that created by the Statutes of the old Indochinese Communist Party in only two significant respects--namely, that the Statutes of the older Party made no provision for a "Politburo" or a party Control Committee. The powers which now seem to be possessed by the "Politburo" of the Lao Dong Party apparently were exercised in the Indochinese Communist Party by a "Permanent Committee for Current Affairs" which was elected by the Central Committee.

Power centers in the Party

6. Since the establishment of the Lao Dong Party in 1951, the actual party organization has become more authoritarian and personalized than the nominal structure specified in the Statutes. The "representative bodies" at the various party echelons have met very infrequently, and the preponderance of governing power within the Party has devolved into a hierarchy of party committees, headed by the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Secretariat (whose existence is assumed but not certain). The party committees at all party echelons generally have controlled the organization and activities of the next lower echelon, for the higher echelon has the statutory responsibility of approving the selection of members of the party committee at the next lower echelon. In practice, authority nominally residing in the party committee has sometimes become

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

concentrated in smaller bodies or in individual leaders. For example, some large basic party units have been headed, according to reports, by individuals instead of by committees as prescribed by the party Statutes. TheStatutes require basic party units having more than nine members to have an elected party committee to administer the policy and programs of the Party and unit. Only small basic party units have the statutory right to omit the party committee and to elect only a secretary to head the unit.

7. Despite the highly centralized nature of the formal party structure it probably has not as yet become as monolithic as desired by the top party leaders, who openly desire to create an organization in Viet Nam with the monolithic characteristics of Communist parties in other countries. Several instances of independent action by some local party leaders have occurred in the past years. These incidents were probably caused by widespread guerrilla warfare and the inadequate communication facilities which prevented tight application of party discipline by the Center. Even before the beginning of large scale warfare in Indochina in 1946, the Communist apparatus in South Viet Nam clearly enjoyed greater administrative autonomy than did the Communist structure in other regions of Viet Nam, and as recently as 1954, southernCommunist leaders' clearly voiced objections to the Geneva settlement showed a failure to quickly transmit the party line from the Party Center. Whether any autonomy continues to exist among party organizations in the South is a vital question.

8. Although there is some evidence that the party chain of command in North Viet Nam is not as yet as centralized as the party leaders desire and proper party organizations would require, no inference should be made from this data that there is a lack of party unity. It is true that there are visible party cliques of those leaders who were associated with the Communist Party of China and those nurtured by the Communist Party of France, and potential sources for friction could derive from decisions on economic development or how to gain control of South Viet Nam. However, such present divisions or future disputes should not be given too much weight.

III. TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY

9. Party structure has been constructed primarily upon a territorial basis, following the governmental administrative breakdown.

10. The actual structure of the Lao Dong Party is unknown. The Statutes indicate that the party is organized in a typical Communist manner,

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

with the hierarchy developing in a pyramidal manner based upon the basic party organizational unit ("chi bo") which may be in a village, industrial enterprise, neighborhood, or regiment. The successive higher levels of party organization are: the "district", "town:, and "precinct" (within a city); the "provincial" and "city" (special municipality) echelon; the "regional" or "zonal" (also referred to as "interzonal") level; and finally, the "central" or "national" level. In addition there may be party organizational units which are constituted outside of the regular organizational pattern, e.g. the Thai-Meo Autonomous Region, or South Viet Nam. The specific relationship of such units to the regular party command is unknown.

11. The number or the location of the various organizational echelons of the party is unknown because of uncertainty as to the geographic subdivisions of the country. There is confusion on the number of administrative organs for geographical units below the national level. According to late reports the Communists have divided all of Viet Nam into ten "zones" or "interzones" to indicate different administrative areas.1

---

1 The following is the list of "zones" and "interzones", based on the assumption that the two terms are interchangeable, with their general geographic locations:

1. Viet Bac Interzone; most of northern Viet Nam, from north of Hanoi to the China border.
2. Interzone IV; most of the southern "Tonkin", and northern "Annam", to the 17th parallel.
3. Interzone III; the "Tonkin" Delta area on the northern bank of the Red River, less Hanoi and Haiphong.
4. Red River - Left Bank; the "Tonkin" Delta area on the southern bank of the Red River.
5. Interzone V; most of "Annam" south of the 17th Parallel.
6. Hanoi Special Zone; the city of Hanoi and the immediate environs.
7. Haiphong Special Zone; the city of Haiphong and the immediate environs.
8. Thai-Meo Autonomous Zone; Northwestern Viet Nam bordering on China and Laos.
9. Hong Gay-Quang Yen Special Zone also called Hong-Quang Special Zone; a small area northeast of Haiphong.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

IV. ORGANIZATION ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

12. Very little reliable information is available concerning the actual composition and functions of the individual party echelons. The important party offices are now located in Hanoi. Before the armistice in Indochina in 1954, several major party agencies reportedly had headquarters in the town of Thai Nguyen, approximately 60 miles north of Hanoi.

13. As is found in the Statutes of other Communist parties, the Statutes of the Lao Dong Party name as the most important party bodies the National Party Congress, the National Party Conference, the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, and the office of the Secretary-General. A French study, dated 1951, also names these bodies as the most influential bodies of the Party. In practice, the National Party Congress does not have the influence or power ascribed to it by the Statutes of the Lao Dong Party, and should not be included with the other named bodies as a body having real political power.

National Party Congress

14. The actual role of the National Party Congress in the Lao Dong Party is much less influential than its statutory powers. Although the party Statutes call the National Party Congress "the highest directing organ of the party", it actually does little more than approve the policies formulated by the Central Committee or the Politburo. Primarily, it provides a "democratic" facade to the policy making organs of the Party.

15. The National Party Congress is composed of representatives "elected" by the regional or zonal party congresses, as well as a number of members -- not exceeding one-half -- of the Central Committee,

---

10. Nambo Interzone; all of "Cochin China".
Some observers include the "Red River-Left Bank" as one of the zones in Interzone III. These same observers do not believe that the Hanoi, Haiphong, and Hong Gay-Quang Yen Special Zones, and the Thai-Meo Autonomous Zone have a status equal to the other interzones. Interzone IV and V, and the Viet Bac and Nambo Interzones are recognized and agreed upon by all observers.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

and a number of "official representatives" "elected" by the Central Committee. In order to be a valid session, the National Party Congress must have, by statute, at least one half of the total party membership represented; and "more than one half the number of the regional, zonal and other party organizations subordinate to the Central Committee" must be represented. Theoretically, the National Party Congress is empowered to elect regular and alternate members of the Central Committee, to approve all reports of that organ, and to make ultimate decisions on the policies and programs of the Party, as well as to make amendments to the party Statutes. The National Party Congress has met only once, in November 1953, since the change in the party name in 1951.

16. By statute, the Central Committee retains a degree of control over the National Party Congress. In addition to the "election" of a number of representatives, the Central Committee is empowered to postpone the meeting of the National Party Congress. The Central Committee also determines the total number of representatives, and the method of election, to the National Party Congress, although the National Party Congress may be required to give nominal approval to such appointments when and if it meets. Such has been the practice in many parties.

National Party Conference

17. Another national representative body is provided for in the Statutes of the Party. Called the "National Party Conference",[1] it is to be convoked by the Central Committee between sessions of the National Party Congress

1 In addition to the single known session of the National Party Congress in November 1953, at least two "National Congresses of Cadres" have been held by the Party, in April and July 1954. The term "National Congress of Cadres" (translated from the French) is not used by other Communist parties. However, the Lao Dong Party Statutes do state that a "cadre conference" may be convoked by party committees (presumably on all levels including the Central Committee) "when a general decision is needed either to seek an opinion on fixed matters or to collect dues and on general experience". This suggests that the "National Congress of Cadres" is identical to the National Party Conference, a party meeting which exists in other parties and for which provision is made in the Lao Dong Party Statutes. In China, the National Party Conference of the Chinese Communist Party has met several times since 1945, but the meeting of the National Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party scheduled for late 1956 is the first such meeting since 1945.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

in order to debate and decide matters of party policy. Its functions are somewhat restricted in comparison to the National Party Congress. Control of the National Party Conference is tightly held by the Central Committee, for it determines the total number of representatives participating, and under statutory requirement, is required to approve all decisions of the National Party Conference. This last item points up in particular the difference between the National Party Congress and the National Party Conference in theory and in fact. As stated in the Statutes, the National Party Congress "examines and approves all reports of the previous Central Committee", whereas "all decisions of the National Party Conference must be approved by the Central Committee". In the practice of other Communist parties, the National Party Conference (being smaller and composed primarily of senior cadres) is easier to control than the National Party Congress.

Central Committee

18. The Central Committee (CC) of the Lao Dong Party is theoretically a very influential party body. According to the party Statutes, the CC is the "organ of highest authority" in the Party between sessions of the National Party Congress. The actual powers, however, seem to reside more in the spheres of ratifying plans, issuing broad policy directives, and formal liaison with the formal government structure and with other non-party centers of power within the regime, rather than in the executive direction of day-to-day party affairs. The party Statutes invest the CC with several important powers -- including ratification of the decisions of the National Party Conference, supervision of "all activities of the party within the national domain", enforcement of the party statutes and policies, and the election of the Secretariat, the Secretary-General, the Politburo, the Central Control Committee, and the members of the party's central departments. Nevertheless, no reliable information is available concerning the actual extent to which the Central Committee exercises its statutory powers. Probably, the Central Committee exercises its powers in a nominal manner only, by receiving and perfunctorily approving periodic reports from the other policy organs of the Party. Such is the practice in many Communist parties. Although the Central Committee is a national party organ and all directives for the Party are issued in its name, the actual power it exercises is limited. It is primarily a "rubber stamp" group, since it does not have the real ability to discuss and question party policy and practice with any hope of modification or change. Although Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh, and the several Politburo members are probably on the Central Committee, the actual power

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

and authority of the Central Committee is diluted by the probable inclusion of aged long-time party members and other party members given Central Committee membership as a reward for their services. This pattern of Central Committee composition is in the Chinese Communist Party pattern.

19. Party Statutes decree the holding of ordinary meetings of the Central Committee once every six months. Party pronouncements have claimed that there have been eight meetings of the CC since the formal establishment of the Party in March 1951. However, these meetings have not been held at the required six-month intervals. Apparently, however, the CC of the Lao Dong Party has met more often than the Central Committees of many other Communist parties in Asia, including the Indochinese Communist Party. The Central Committee of the latter organization reportedly convened only eight times in the eleven-year period from 1930 to May 1941.

20. The Central Committee consists of 25 to 30 members of whom 17 to 19 are probably regular members, with the remaining number being alternate members.[1] The membership of a Central Committee usually represents a diversity of talents and backgrounds, and includes some party leaders who evidently serve in a planning capacity, and some party leaders who are employed mainly in an operational role. It is probably composed of both military men and civilians.[2]

21. In the past, detailed national programs for North Viet Nam have been issued in the name of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, and have presaged action by the government machinery. The Agrarian Reform Movement, and the formation of the Thai-Meo Autonomous Region are examples. In these instances, party announcements apparently preceded action by the Government of North Viet Nam.

---

1 The actual size and membership of the Central Committee is unknown. The figure given is based on what has been accepted by several other intelligence services as to its size.

2 Leading army officers are often included on the various party committees, up to and including the Central Committee. This is the usual pattern for Communist parties in an "armed struggle" status. Under Communist doctrine, military activities are dictated by political purposes as well as by military

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Political Bureau (Politburo)

22. The "Politburo" appears to be the most powerful office within the Lao Dong Party, if such power reckons in both policy formulation and direction of party activities. However, practically no information about any organizational aspect of the "Politburo" is available. Occasional radio broadcasts from North Viet Nam during 1955 identified a prominent party leader as being a member of the "Politburo." The party Statutes merely state that the "Politburo" holds the highest power in the Lao Dong Party between sessions of the Central Committee, and that the "Politburo", together with the Central Committee, has the authority to regulate party affairs. The Central Committee possesses the statutory power to elect to and fill vacancies on the Politburo. However, the Politburo itself, as the source of power, can, in fact, fill its own vacancies and have those appointments approved as a matter of course by the Central Committee. Official American sources in Saigon conjectured in 1951 that the "Politburo" had nine members, although a French study in that year claimed that there were only six members of that body. The American sources in question mentioned the following names as possibly being members of the "Politburo", Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, Vo Nguyen Giap, Le Duan, Le Duc Tho, Hoang Quoc Viet, Nguyen Chi Thanh, and Nguyen Luong Bang. The French study omitted the names of Ho Chi Minh and Nguyen Luong Bang from this list and stated that either Le Duan or Le Duc Tho -- but not both men -- were possibly members of the "Politburo".

23. Presumably the Politburo is composed in the Communist pattern, of the leading figures of the Party, and in size is between the Central Committee and the Secretariat. Although there have been several estimates as to the size and composition of the Politburo, Hoang Quoc Viet has been the sole member of the body who has been officially acknowledged as such. It is probable that several of the following, if not all, are on the Politburo: Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh, Ton Duc Thang, PhamVan Dong, and Vo Nguyen Giap.

---

requirements. Consequently, a military personage in the Party must be cognizant of the political policies of the Party. A notable examples is Chu Teh, who is the senior military man in China, next to Mao Tse-tung, and has always been a member of the highest party organs. Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi-minh themselves are examples which illustrate how the same individual dictates military and party policies in a resistance period.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

The Secretariat

24. The Secretariat of the Lao Dong Party[1] is provided for in the Statutes of the Lao Dong Party, and is theoretically responsible for the administration of party matters. As stated in the Statutes, the Secretariat is charged with the responsibility for "everyday work according to the decisions of the Central Committee and the Politburo". Presumably Truong Chinh, Secretary-General of the Party since its founding, heads the Secretariat.

25. The Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party assigns similar working functions to its Secretariat, stating that it "attends to the daily work of the Central Committee, according to the decisions of the Politburo". The composition of the Secretariat of the Chinese Communist Party indicates that it has a high-level policy function, being composed of the five most influential members of the Party; Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, and Chen Yun.

26. In the Lao Dong Party of Viet Nam, the existence of the Secretariat, its composition and its methods of functioning, have never been verified.

V. DEPARTMENTS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

27. There are undoubtedly other national organs in the Lao Dong Party which function under the Central Committee of the Party. The Statutes of the Party provides the Central Committee with "the authority to organize subsidiary auxiliary groups such as a Propaganda Committee, and Economic and Financial Committee, etc." These Committees are in addition to the other central party organs elected by the Central Committee; the Politburo, the Secretariat, the Secretary General, and the Central Control Committee, and (in what may have been a temporary wartime provision) "Central Administrations to supervise distant regions".

1 This office has on occasion been incorrectly translated, from the French "secretaire particulier", as "private secretary".

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

28. Organs of the Central Committee of the Party appear to be organized on two different bases; organs like the Political Bureau which are concerned with overall party policy matters; and the second type like the Propaganda Committee which are organized on a more functional basis. The functional groups, and they are only assumed to exist, are probably headed by senior specialist cadres and are undoubtedly responsible for the planning, implementation and administration of party policies and party programs as formulated and developed by the party's policy organs. If they do exist, the functional type of central party groups, although organized by the Central Committee of the Party, are probably subordinate and directly responsible to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat of the Party. Similar functional type bodies are probably organized on the lesser party levels, and function within their particular jurisdictions in a manner similar to the central organs. It is not known if any of the functional type central organs of the Party do actually exist. On the lesser levels there have been reports that some of the party's administrative jurisdictions have organized such bodies as the "Propaganda Committee", "Finance Committee", etc.

A Comparison with the Communist Parties of China and Indonesia

29. Two other major Communist parties of the area, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) do not have exactly the same central departments of the functional type. In the Chinese Communist Party, these central bodies are: Organization Department; Propaganda Department; United Front Work Department; Central Control Committee; Rural Work Department; Marx-Lenin Institute; the Editorial and Translation Bureau of the Works of Marx, Lenin, Engels, and Stalin; and possibly the Social Affairs Department. In Indonesia, the central departments are: Organization Department; Agit/Prop Department; Youth Department; Women's Department; Labor Department; Peasants Department; Peace Department; Department of Parliamentary Representation; Department of National Economy; and the Department of Science and Culture. As can be seen, only two departments, the "Organization Department" and the "Propaganda Department" (called the "Agit/Prop Department" in the PKI) appear in the two parties.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

30. The differences in the number and functions of the central departments in the two parties are due to their different situations. The PKI is legal, overt, and a party seeking power. The Chinese Communist Party is a Party which has held national political power for seven years.

31. Formal party regulations militate against direct liaison of a Central Committee department with its counterpart on a lower level. As a logical feature of the basic principle of centralized control of the party organization, the proper channel of communication between two such specialized organs, at least on paper, is through the party secretary, or the party committee, is responsible for party activities on each level. They appoint the members of the various functional committees and are solely responsible for their work.

Propaganda Committee

32. The functions of a "Propaganda Committee" if it exists, are implied in its title. Such a committee on the national level would be responsible for the selection of appropriate propaganda themes, and media to be employed, the organization and direction of party schools and training courses for the indoctrination and training of party members and cadres. The work of this type of a committee at all lower party levels would be the responsibility of the individual party committee with the overall direction and guidance emanating from the central department.

Economic and Financial Committee

33. Almost no information is available about the Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs. A French study of 1951 surmised that this committee supervised the establishment and maintenance of a financial system within the Party and of safeguarding Party funds, and conducts inspections of governmental projects affecting party finances, such as agrarian reform, creation of cooperatives, and tax collections.

"Committee of Party Affairs"

34. The organ which French sources term the "Committee of Party Affairs" appears identical with what is usually called the "Organization Department" in Communist parties. In North Viet Nam, this committee

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

was reported to have primary administrative jurisdiction over all matters of party organization and administration. It also reportedly supervises the establishment of, and changes in, all organizational components of the Party, maintains dossiers on all party members, transmits the party "line" throughout all party echelons, and checks on the holding of sessions of criticism and self-criticism by all party units. In North Viet Nam in 1951 similar party organs were reported active at the national, interzone, zone, and provincial levels.

Central Military Committee

35. The Central Military Committee of the Party was a very important body in 1951, according to French sources, and it may exist today although the Chinese experience suggests its functions may become governmentalized now that the Party is in power. In 1951, the Central Military Committee advised the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party on military strategy and other military matters. Members of the Central Military Committee were appointed by the Central Committee. In that year the Central Military Committee was said to have been headed by Vo Nguyen Giap, the commanding general of the "Vietnam Peoples Army."

Central Control Committee

36. The control committees at the various party levels are deemed to be of sufficient importance to have a chapter of the party Statutes assigned to them. According to these Statutes, the Central Control Committee is appointed by the Central Committee; and members of the control committees on the lower party echelons are elected by the local party committees, and must be approved by the next higher party committee.

37. In 1951, the Central Control Committee was reported to be vested with major responsibility for observing the deportment of party members, for administering punishments for breaches of party discipline, and for hearing appeals from punished party members. This is in accord with practice in other parties; the control committees are charged with insuring the orthodoxy and loyalty of party members. Other reported functions of control committees at the various echelons included investigations of the work methods -- and presumably also of the efficiency -- of party members, of aiding party committees in establishing controls over subordinate party units, and to maintain an audit of party funds. It may also have responsibility for some clandestine functions.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

38. In view of their responsibilities and functions, the line of command for the various echelons of the control committees is unclear, although direction is assumed to be tightly held at the national level. It is likely that the control committees form a line of command parallel to but independent of the regular party command structure, terminating in the Central Control Committee. The Central Control Committee in most Communist parties is responsible -- on paper at least -- to the Central Committee and is more important than other departments of the CC.

Other reported committees

39. In addition to the above party organs, the French have also reported, in their 1952 study of the Lao Dong Party, that there were in existence in 1951 a "Committee on Current Affairs" and a number of what the French called "technical committees". The functions and responsibilities of these groups as described by the French, indicate that they were at least in part, similar to or identical with some of the Lao Dong Party central organs described above.

VI. PARTY ORGANIZATIONS BELOW THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Zonal Level

40. At present, there is an absence of specific details on the organization of the Party on the level of the "regions" or "zone". To judge by the Statutes and scattered intelligence reports, the party organization on these lower levels bears a general resemblance to the party organization on the central level. The Statutes of the Lao Dong Party provide that the highest authority of the "region" or "zone" is held by the "Zonal Party Congress:, which is composed of "elected" representatives of lesser party elements. The Zonal Party Congresses are required by party statute to meet each eighteen months, but like all of the various party congresses, from the lowest level to the national level, they have met less frequently than ostensibly required. In general, the Zonal Party Congress, like the other party congresses on the various levels, possesses little actual power in the affairs of the Party.

41. One of the principal functions of the Zonal Party Congress is to elect a Zonal Party Committee which for the particular area resembles the Central Committee. By party statute, the Zonal Party Committee is "the organ of highest authority" between sessions of the Zonal Party Congress.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

The Zonal Party Congress also elects the delegation to the National Party Congress as required. A "Secretary" and a "Standing Committee" are in turn elected by the Zonal Party Committee to administer the party activities for the particular area. Although the Statutes assign major party responsibilities to the Zonal Party Congress, it is actually the Secretary who is the leading party power figure for a particular area.

42. On the lower party levels, from the basic party unit to the provincial party unit, the Party Statutes outline an organizational pattern similar in most respects to what exists on the Zonal level. The representative body -- the "congress" -- of all elements of the party organizations above the basic party unit theoretically holds the highest authority for the particular echelon. Each representative body "elects" the party committee for the particular party unit. The party committee in turn "elects" a "Secretary" and a "Standing Committee" to administer the party affairs of the unit.

43. The size of the party committee on all levels is, according to the Statutes, determined by the "congress" of the particular echelon "in accordance with the general decisions of the higher echelon". The size of the party committee on different echelons may vary, as may the size of the party committees within the same level. Normally, the party committee would include the leading party cadre of the area.

44. Largely because of sweeping changes in administrative boundaries in Viet Nam on both sides of the 17th Parallel since the 1956 Geneva Conference, information is not available about the exact number of provincial and municipal headquarters within the party structure. It seems likely, nevertheless, that there are approximately 40 to 80 provincial units and three to five municipal apparatuses of the party.[1] There traditionally have been about 67 provinces in all of Viet Nam, but the party evidently does not have headquarters in some mountainous provinces, and has apparently

1 The number of provincial and special municipal units is derived from an estimate of the number of such governmental administrative units. The exact number of provincial and municipal apparatuses organized by either the party or the government is unknown. Within the Lao Dong party the special municipal units may have status equivalent to that of a province.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

consolidated several others for purposes of administration. The governmental decree of April 1955 which formally established the "Thai-Meo Autonomous Area" out of two previously-existing provinces and portions of two other provinces in northwestern Viet Nam did not provide for a provincial organizational scheme within this "Autonomous Area", and, presumably, party organization parallels governmental organization in this instance. The party probably grants special municipality status to Hanoi, Haiphong and Saigon-Cholon.

45. Party organization at the provincial and municipal level is particularly significant from an operational viewpoint. To judge from fragmentary reports a large number of party cadres seem to be employed on this level.[1] Also many documents supposedly captured during the Indochinese war are detailed operational documents for this level. Many members of the various provincial and municipal party committees concurrently with their party positions, hold active positions in non-party organizations, such as the formal Government of North Viet Nam, or the mass organizations such as the key Fatherland Front. For example, the Secretary of the party committee in Kien An Province in North Viet Nam in 1954 was also reported to be simultaneously serving as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Lien Viet Front for the province. This interlocking of party position and governmental or mass organization within a facade of "democracy" is more sharply shown in China. In that country the provincial party chairman is, in the great majority of cases, the chairman of either the provincial government or its "people's congress".

Lower Party Levels

46. The statutory provisions for party organizations at the level of the province, city, town or city precinct, closely resemble each other. The Statutes state that the various party committees are to be elected

1 The concentration of party cadres on the lower party levels is presumably the practical application of the well-known Communist principle of maintaining close contact with the "masses", for the party knows that the work of the Party is done at the "grass roots". For example, the party cadre has been instructed to take the lead in implementing governmental programs, e.g. agrarian "reform".

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

directly by the party congress of that level, convened at varying statutory intervals. Once again, the party committee of the province, city, town or city precinct theoretically exercises the greatest executive and administrative powers in the particular territorial jurisdiction. Some districts appear to have fairly elaborately organized party structures. For example, a district in Kien An Province in 1954 had a secretary, a six-man party committee, a secretariat, and functional committees for Party Affairs, and for Propaganda and Training.

VII. BASIC PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

47. The organization of a basic party organizational unit evidently depends on its size. According to the Party Statutes, units of less than nine regular members are supposed to be headed only by a "secretary" and possibly a "deputy secretary", while larger units are theoretically directed by a party committee of three to seven members, as well as a secretary and deputy secretary. The full unit membership is supposed to elect a party committee and/or secretary. From reports it appears that the majority of basic party units have party committees.

48. A basic party unit can be organized, according to the Statutes, in any locality where a minimum of three party members are sufficiently close to each other to hold meetings, such as in a commercial enterprise, school, or village, and where the necessary approval of higher party authorities is obtained. In some areas where party members are numerous, the basic party unit may be divided into sub-units and placed under the direction of a sub-unit leader. In such cases, the sub-unit and the sub-unit leader remains responsible to the basic party organizational unit. Each basic party unit is supposed to hold plenary sessions once a month to hear reports on the progress of its party missions, to deliberate on directives from higher party levels, to fix new goals and to allocate new tasks, and to decide on the admission of new members. Party Statutes decree that the membership of basic party units in a commercial enterprise should not exceed seventy members, while in a town, or city precinct, the total membership of a basic party unit should not exceed fifty. There is no reliable evidence about the total number of basic party units and it is undoubtedly constantly changing. It has been repeatedly stated, and recently reemphasized, that the basic party units in rural areas are the backbone of the Lao Dong Party in Viet Nam, a position similar to that taken by the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist Party of Indonesia.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

49. The basic party units are vested by the party Statutes with the following responsibilities:

a) execution of instructions of higher party authorities;

b) attempts to popularize policies and programs of the party and the formal governments;

c) direction of the populace in the fulfillment of these policies and programs;

d) assignment of tasks to members, and supervision of their works;

e) education and indoctrination of members;

f) recruitment of new members;

g) enforcement of party discipline and administering punishment for breaches of discipline;

h) collection of party dues and fees; and

i) sending regular reports on the current situation to higher party authorities.

One intelligence report in 1954 stated that all party units in Bao Lieu Province were under orders to hold collective study sessions once every two weeks, and to carry on frequent sessions of criticisms and self-criticism. This is a Communist method for the training and indoctrination of party members.

VIII. OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENTS

50. Another organizational element of the Lao Dong Party is the party "fraction" in "mass" organizations. An organized group of party members, the fraction is present in labor unions, elements of the North Vietnamese Army, organs of the Government of North Viet Nam, and in "mass" organizations. The fraction is utilized to propagate and enforce the party program and party decisions, and "to increase the strength and influence of the party" within the particular organization. Fractions may be organized at any echelon of the "mass" organization by the party committee for that echelon.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

51. For strictly party administrative purposes, the members of the fraction remain responsible to a regularly constituted basic party unit; but for activities within the "mass" organization, the fraction is directed and supervised by the party committee that formed it. Fractions may maintain liaison with other party fractions at higher, lower, or equal levels, "to exchange opinions, experiences and special material".

"Committees of Cadres"

52. There also seems to be some components of the Lao Dong Party which do not have a clearly defined party status. Some pre-1954 intelligence reports have noted the existence of "Committees of Cadres" which apparently have been few in number, but which according to reports have served as party committees for party units in Cambodia and Laos. It may be that these "Committees of Cadres" have referred to meetings of a local version of the National Party Conference, or to a party committee directing party activities in these two neighboring countries.

Autonomous sections

53. A Lao Dong Party document and some intelligence reports refer to what appears to be a special category of basic party units, the "autonomous section". These small units, consisting of three to five highly trained and reliable party members, seem to have tenuous contact with the regular party hierarchy. In past years, before 1954, "autonomous sections" were reportedly used most often in remote and "enemy occupied" regions.

54. The exact nature and functions of an "autonomous section" are unknown. It seems logical that it was a wartime innovation used by the Lao Dong Party when communications between widely dispersed units and higher party echelons were difficult. There are provisions in the Statutes of the Lao Dong Party for the organizing of party units in "zones temporarily occupied by the enemy". In such cases, when "the party cannot carry out its activities openly", the Central Committee of the party determines "the methods and system of organization" of the party units.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

DIAGRAMS OF THE LAO DONG PARTY OF VIET NAM

1. The purpose of this section of the paper is to outline the national organization of the Lao Dong Party of North Viet Nam. As the reorganization of the now defunct Indochinese Communist Party, the Lao Dong Party is the political party in Viet Nam which represents the Communist movement in that country; it is the Party in power in the Government of North Viet Nam in which the final and absolute power of the country resides. As in other Communist countries, the Government of North Viet Nam exists as a facade for the Lao Dong Party, through which the Communist program is implemented and through which the centralized Communist party extends and consolidates its control over the country and the inhabitants.

2. This paper is limited to the identification of the organs of the Party that exists on the national level; it is in the national echelon that the party power resides, as a result of the centralized power structure of Communist parties. The Statutes of the Lao Dong Party confirms this seat of power, under the Communist doctrine of "Democratic Centralism".

3. Information on the "national"(also called "central") organs of the Lao Dong Party is fragmentary and scanty. Much of the available information on the subject cannot be accepted as being definitive or completely reliable.

4. A diagram of the party's highest organizational level can be drawn on the basis of material in the 1951 Statutes of the Lao Dong Party, but the result is a very elementary, and undoubtedly incomplete, diagram of what actually exists at the present. French intelligence sources in 1951 indicated a wider organization on the national level, with several central organs in addition to those specified in the party's Statutes. Confirmatory evidence, or information on the source or access to such information is not available, preventing substantive evaluation of the French report. In addition, much of the French version of the structure of the central echelon of the Lao Dong Party is not in accord with the structure of other known Communist parties.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

5. The above does not necessarily imply that the accuracy or authenticity of the French information is in question. It is recognized that due to the history of the Communist movement in Viet Nam, the organization of the Lao Dong Party may have developed a bit differently from what developed in Communist parties in other countries. The Lao Dong Party is still in the process of formalizing its organizational structure in the country, particularly since coming to power in North Viet Nam in 1954. However, differences due to local requirements do not usually result in such marked differences in the organizational pattern of Communist parties as the French suggest. Rather, the organization of a Communist party is quite stylized, with the form depending on the status of the Communist movement in the particular country.

6. In Figure 1 of this paper, the structural diagram of the organs of a "model Communist party" is presented. As shown, the diagram is one of basic design, and is presented as the form "to which most parties aspire and to which they revert whenever political conditions permit them to do so". As a pattern of organization, it provides a skeleton which may be quickly elaborated to take over all the necessary supervision of government whenever the opportunity arises.

7. For comparison with the "model Communist party", Figure 2 presents the central organs of the Lao Dong Party, and includes only those organs specifically described in the Statutes of the Lao Dong Party. Several of these national bodies have never been acknowledged as being in existence in the Communist press and radio; only the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, and the Secretary-General have ever been officially identified as functioning bodies. The diagram also includes those offices which are only provisionally provided for in the Statutes, which can be formed upon the initiative of the Central Committee.

8. Following these two diagrams are Figures 3a and 3b, provided by French Intelligence sources. However as stated earlier, there is no confirmation for some of the elements included by the French, and as will be noted, there are a number of differences, both major and minor, between this diagram and the preceding two diagrams.

9. Figure 4 of the Chinese Communist Party is presented as an example of the organization of a Communist Party in the Far East. Figure 5, another diagram of the Chinese Communist Party, is enclosed in certain copies only. These have been selected for comparison due to the possibility

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

That the Lao Dong Party may ultimately take the form of the Chinese Communist Party. This is not a definitive conclusion, but is an opinion based upon a number of similarities existing between the two parties and their domestic and international positions. For example, the Vietnamese Communists currently follow the Chinese ideological principle that the revolutionary base is composed of four classes; the peasants, the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie. Also, both parties emphasize the importance of organizing the peasants. In both countries a large proletariat class is absent. In each country power was achieved by similar guerrilla military techniques. In addition, the geographic proximity of the two Communist countries and the training in China of a number of leading Vietnamese Communist, makes it worthwhile to examine the Chinese Communist Party structure and organization as a possible example for the Lao Dong Party.

Attachments (6)

Figure 1: Diagram of the theoretical organization of the national level of a "model Communist Party".

Figure 2: Diagram of the organization of the national level of the Lao Dong Party of Viet Nam according to the Statutes of the Lao Dong Party.

Figure 3a: Diagram of the national echelon of the Lao Dong Party, from French sources.

Figure 3b: Incumbents of the national organs of the Lao Dong Party, from French sources.

Figure 4: Diagram of the statutory organization of the national level of the Chinese Communist Party as of 1 December 1955.

Figure 5: Diagram of the Chinese Communist Party (with certain copies only.)

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

CONFIDENTIAL

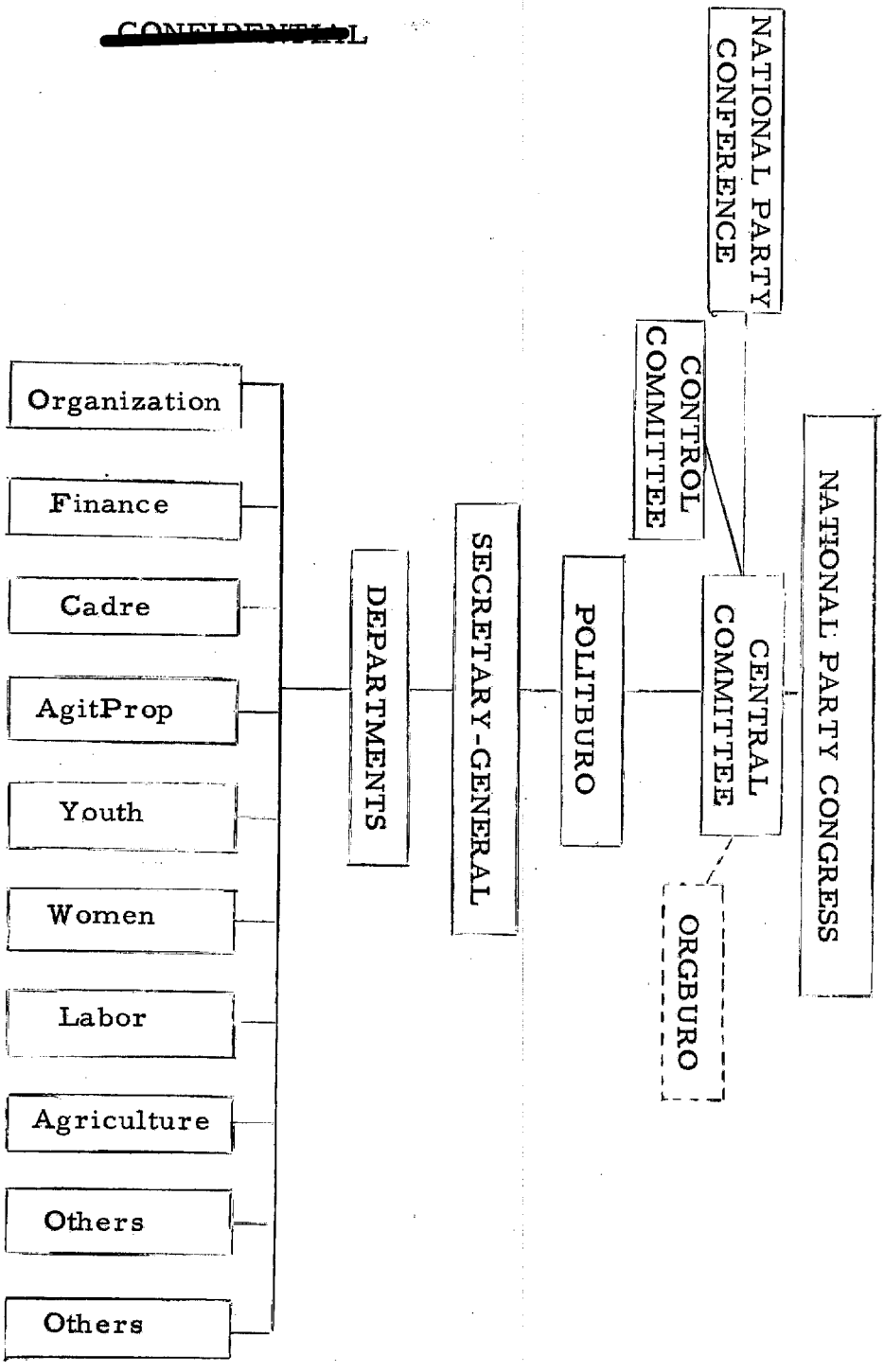


FIGURE 1: Diagram of the Theoretical Organization of the National Level of a Model Communist Party

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

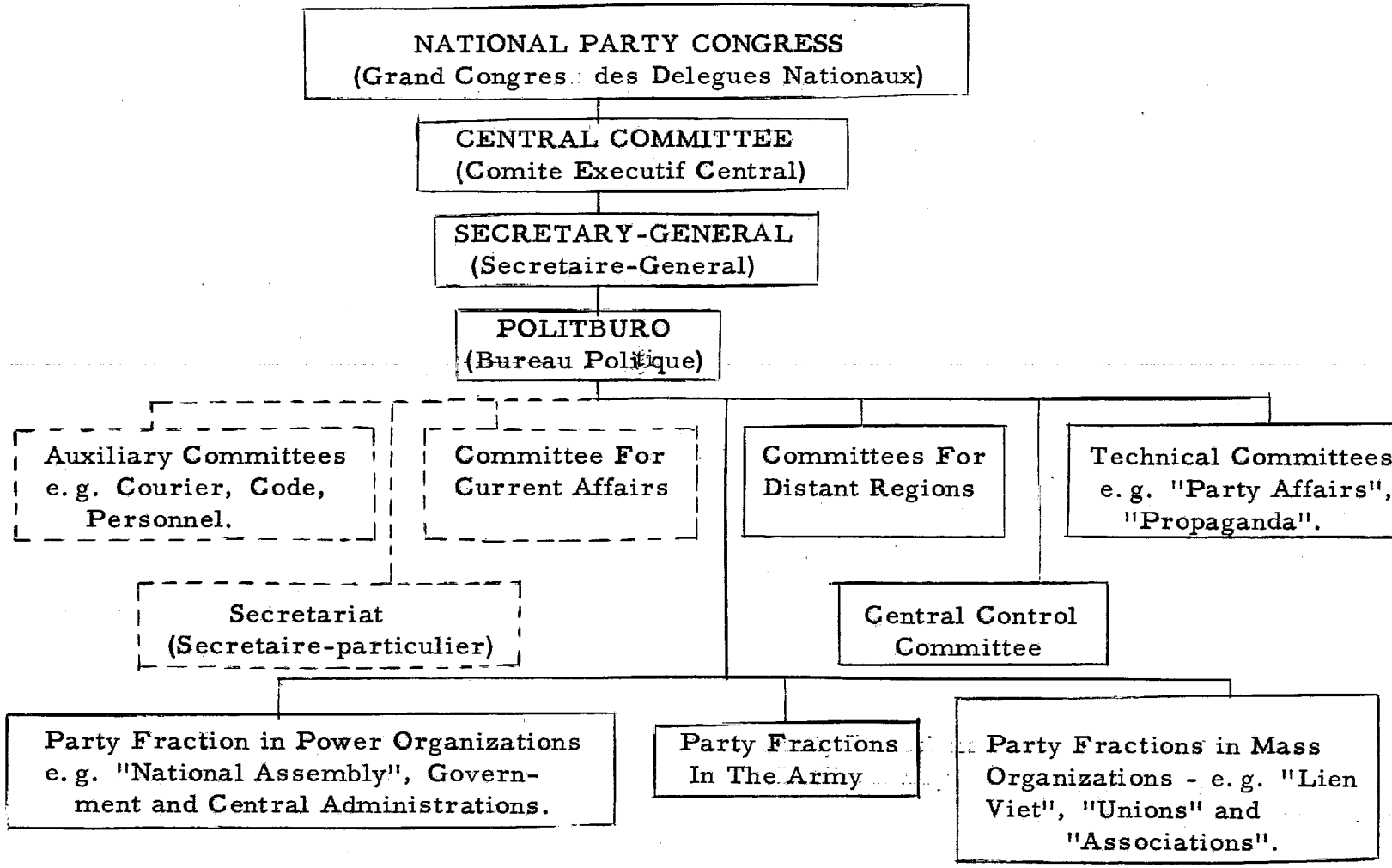
CONFIDENTIAL

FIGURE 2: Diagram of the organization of the national level of the Lao Dong Party of Viet Nam according to the Statutes of the Lao Dong Party

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3



NOTE: For comments on reliability of this diagram see text paragraphs 4, 5, and 8.

FIGURE 3a: Diagram of the general organization of the Lao Dong Party of the Central Echelon, 1951. From French sources.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEMBERS

HO CHI MINH
TRUONG CHINH
NGUYEN CHI THANH
LE DUAN
VO NGUYEN GIAP
PHAM VAN DONG
LE DUC THO
NGUYEN LUONG BANG
HOANG QUOC VIET
CHU VAN TAN
TON DUC THANG
LE VAN LUONG
TRAN DANG NINH
HOANG VAN HOAN
LE THANH NGHIEM
TRAN VAN HOAN
NGUYEN DUY TRINH
PHAM HUNG
UNG VAN KHIEM

ALTERNATE MEMBERS

NGUYEN KHANG
TO HUU
NGUYEN VAN TAN
HO TUNG MAU
HA HUY GIAP
NGUYEN THUONG VU
HO SI KHANG
NGUYEN CHANH
VAN TIEN DUNG
HOANG ANH

SECRETARY-GENERAL

TRUONG CHINH

(aka DANG XUAN KHU)

POLITBURO

TRUONG CHINH
LE DUAN or LE DUC THO
PHAM VAN DONG
VO NGUYEN GIAP
NGUYEN CHI THANH
HOANG QUOC VIET

NOTE: HO CHI MINH is named as "President" of the Lao Dong Party in the text of the study from which this diagram has been taken.

FIGURE 3b: Composition of the "Power Center" of the Lao Dong Party, 1951. From French sources.

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3

CONFIDENTIAL

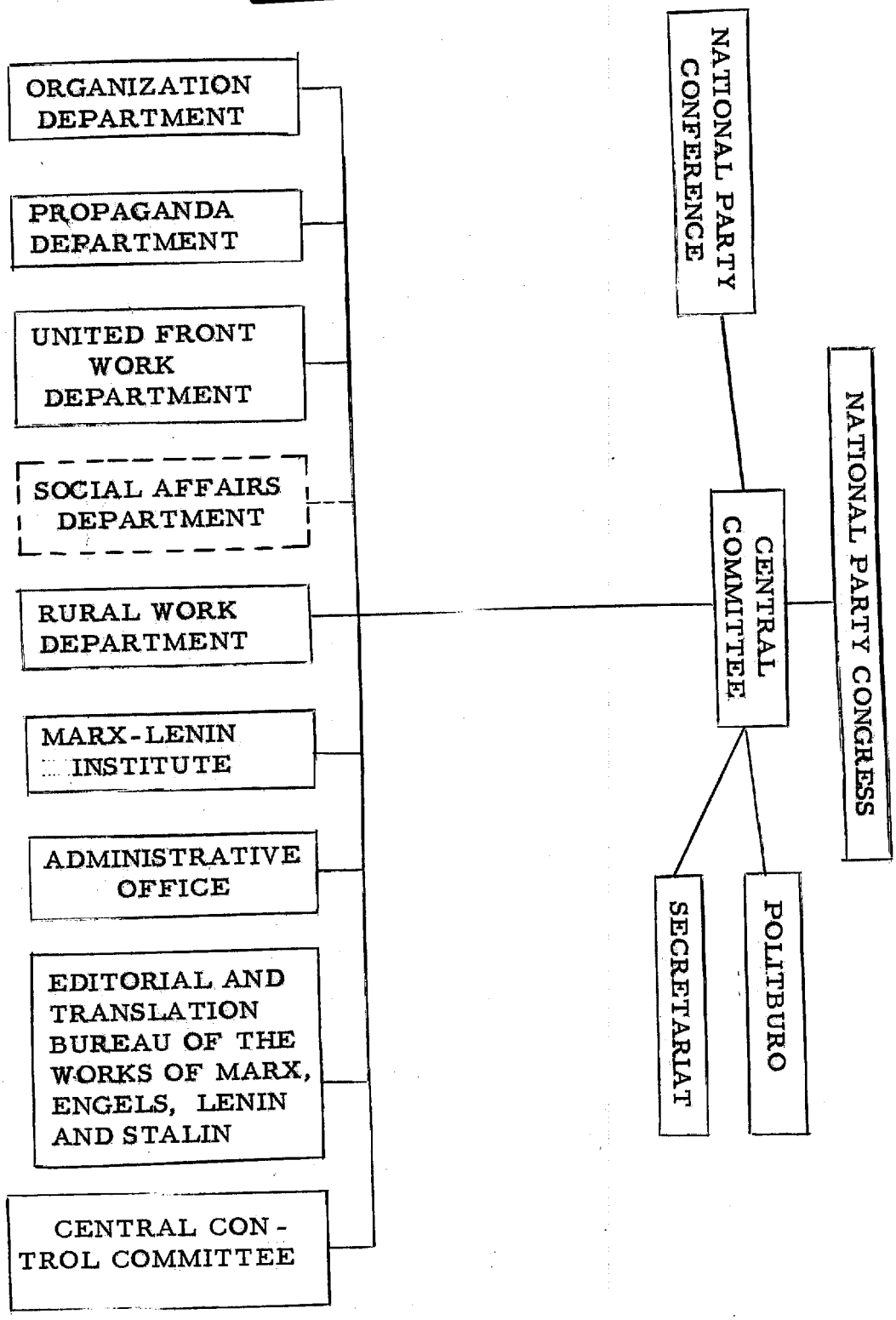


FIGURE 4: Diagram of the statutory organization of the national level of the Chinese Communist Party as of 1 December 1955

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved For Release : CIA-RDP78-00915R000400450005-3